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Counsel for Defendants

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ALASKA**

GWICH'IN STEERING COMMITTEE, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

DOUG BURGUM, in his official capacity as
Secretary of the United States Department of
the Interior, *et al.*,

Defendants,

and

NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH, *et al.*,

Intervenor-Defendants.

Case No. 3:20-cv-00204-SLG

FEDERAL DEFENDANTS' STATUS REPORT

Gwich'in Steering Committee v. Burgum
FEDERAL DEFENDANTS' STATUS REPORT

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This case involves a challenge to the August 2020 Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision (“2020 ROD”), which was superseded by the December 2024 Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Record of Decision (“2024 ROD”) selecting Alternative D2 from the November 2024 Final Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (“SEIS”). The case has been stayed (along with three others challenging the 2020 ROD), and the parties previously reported on various events that could affect “whether and how to proceed with this litigation.” Joint Status Report and Unopposed Mot. to Continue Stay at 5, ECF No. 112; *see also* Text Order, ECF No. 115 (continuing stay and directing the filing of a further joint status report). Counsel have endeavored “to prepare a joint status report reflecting input from all parties to this litigation that will continue the stay in effect in all cases.” ECF No. 116. However, the parties have been unable to agree on the next steps for this litigation. Federal Defendants therefore provide an additional update and request to continue the stay until September 30, 2025, or within five days of a final decision regarding any leases in the Coastal Plain originally issued under the 2020 ROD.

Following a change in administration, on January 20, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14153 titled *Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource Potential*, 90 Fed. Reg. 8,347 (January 29, 2025), Section 3 of which directs heads of agencies to “exercise all lawful authority and discretion available to them” to take certain steps, including placing a “temporary moratorium” on, and conducting “review” of, and ultimately replacing, the 2024 ROD. On February 3, 2025, Secretary Burgum issued Secretary’s Order 3422, also titled *Unleashing Alaska’s Extraordinary Resource*

Potential, which outlines a process to begin implementing the Executive Order. Further, on March 25, 2025, this Court ruled in *Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority v. Bureau of Land Management*, No. 3:24-cv-00051-SLG, that the Department of the Interior's 2023 decision cancelling leases issued under the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program was unlawful.

As part of implementing the above Executive and Secretarial direction, the Department of the Interior has determined that it intends to issue a new ROD in the third quarter of 2025 based on the analysis and alternatives presented in the 2024 SEIS, and following reinitiation of consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Based on this Court's March 2025 ruling, the leases originally issued under the 2020 ROD have been restored to their suspended status immediately preceding the vacated 2023 cancellation decision. After issuing the new ROD, the Department anticipates issuing a new decision concerning the leases originally issued under the 2020 ROD. While these leases remain in suspended status, no lease operations may transpire on the leases, the terms of the leases are tolled, and lease rentals are suspended.

An extension of the current stay will conserve judicial resources and promote the efficient and orderly disposition of the case(s), including by ensuring that any litigation continuing before this Court will reflect operative agency action(s) for the reinstatement or management of the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program based on the Executive Order and Secretary's Order.

Federal Defendants therefore request that this Court continue the stay of proceedings in this case until September 30, 2025, or within five days of a final decision

regarding any leases originally issued under the 2020 ROD. Intervenor-Defendants have indicated they will file a response to this status report but do not oppose the request to continue the stay. Plaintiffs' position is that the stay should not be extended further and they intend to file a response to this status report. Federal Defendants agree to submit a status report on or before September 30, 2025, or within five days of a final decision regarding any leases, whichever is sooner, and will endeavor to make such filing a joint status report.

Respectfully submitted this 9th of May 2025.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on May 9, 2025, a copy of the foregoing was served by electronic means on all counsel of record by the Court's CM/ECF system.

/s/ Paul A. Turcke
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